



# HOW DO BEARS SLEEP?

Written and illustrated by E.J. Bird

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by E. J. Bird

There's a chill in the air and a promise of snow in the gray, cloudy skies—winter is on its way. It's time once again for bears to find a cozy place to curl up and hibernate. Have you ever wondered what happens to bears during those long, dark months until spring? How *do* bears sleep?

Artist and storyteller E. J. Bird wonders just that in this endearing book about the habits of hibernating bears. Do they toss and turn? Do they dream? And how do they stay warm all winter long? The comical bear drawings and silly bear questions will keep children laughing and wondering what really goes on when bears sleep.





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Summary: Describes, in verse, what goes on in the bear's den during winter hibernation.

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*For all children who are lucky enough  
to have grandmothers like Nan,  
my sweet wife and very special friend*








## Author's Note



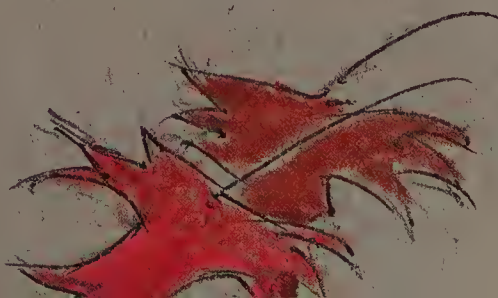
All living things have little clocklike gadgets buried somewhere inside telling them how fast to grow, when to get old, when to get hungry or sleepy—things like that.

Some animals, like squirrels and groundhogs and frogs and bears, have clocks that tell them it's high time they go to sleep all winter. That's right—ALL WINTER! And they find themselves someplace out of the weather, like a cave, and they really do go to sleep—that's called hibernating. And all the fat that they've stored up keeps them alive while they sleep.



There are lots of people who have uncovered nests of squirrels or dug frogs out of the mud in the winter-time, but not many go snooping around where the bears are sleeping.

I've often wondered what goes on in that cave with the bears—haven't you?







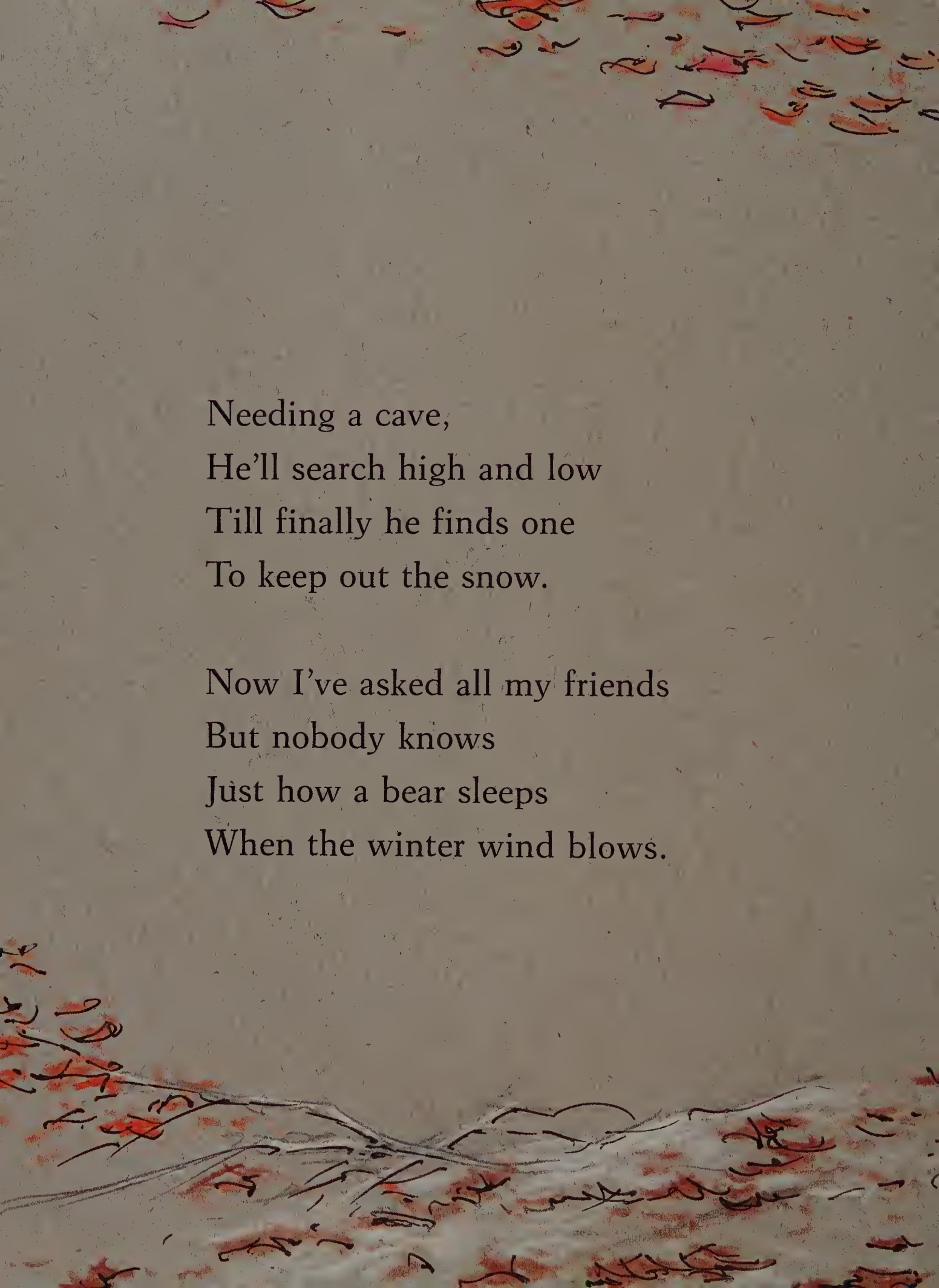
The north wind is stirring  
And dry leaves are shifting,  
Soon you'll see snow  
A-blowing and drifting.



This is the time  
When winter comes creeping,



And this is the time  
When a bear thinks of sleeping.



Needing a cave,  
He'll search high and low  
Till finally he finds one  
To keep out the snow.

Now I've asked all my friends  
But nobody knows  
Just how a bear sleeps  
When the winter wind blows.







Does he make up a bed  
Of dry leaves and stones,  
Or lie on the ground  
Just resting his bones?





Does he sleep on his belly  
Or flat on his back?  
With his mouth opened wide  
Or just opened a crack?



Does he twist? Does he turn?  
Does he snarl and get grumpy?  
Does he tear up his bed  
When it starts feeling lumpy?

Does he lie very still,  
Without any twitching,  
Or lift up a paw  
To scratch where it's itching?







Is part of his time  
Spent arranging the boulders  
To keep the sharp edges  
From scuffing his shoulders?



Does he stare, eyes wide open,  
Without ever blinking,  
Or shut his eyes tight  
To help while he's thinking?



Does he squint in the dark,  
Lying still in his bed?  
Does he rub his brown eyes  
Till his brown eyes are red?



Does he curl in a ball?  
Does he whimper or snore?  
Does he have scary dreams  
And wake up with a roar?





Or maybe he dreams  
Of grubs under logs  
Or cool summer evenings  
And the croaking of frogs.

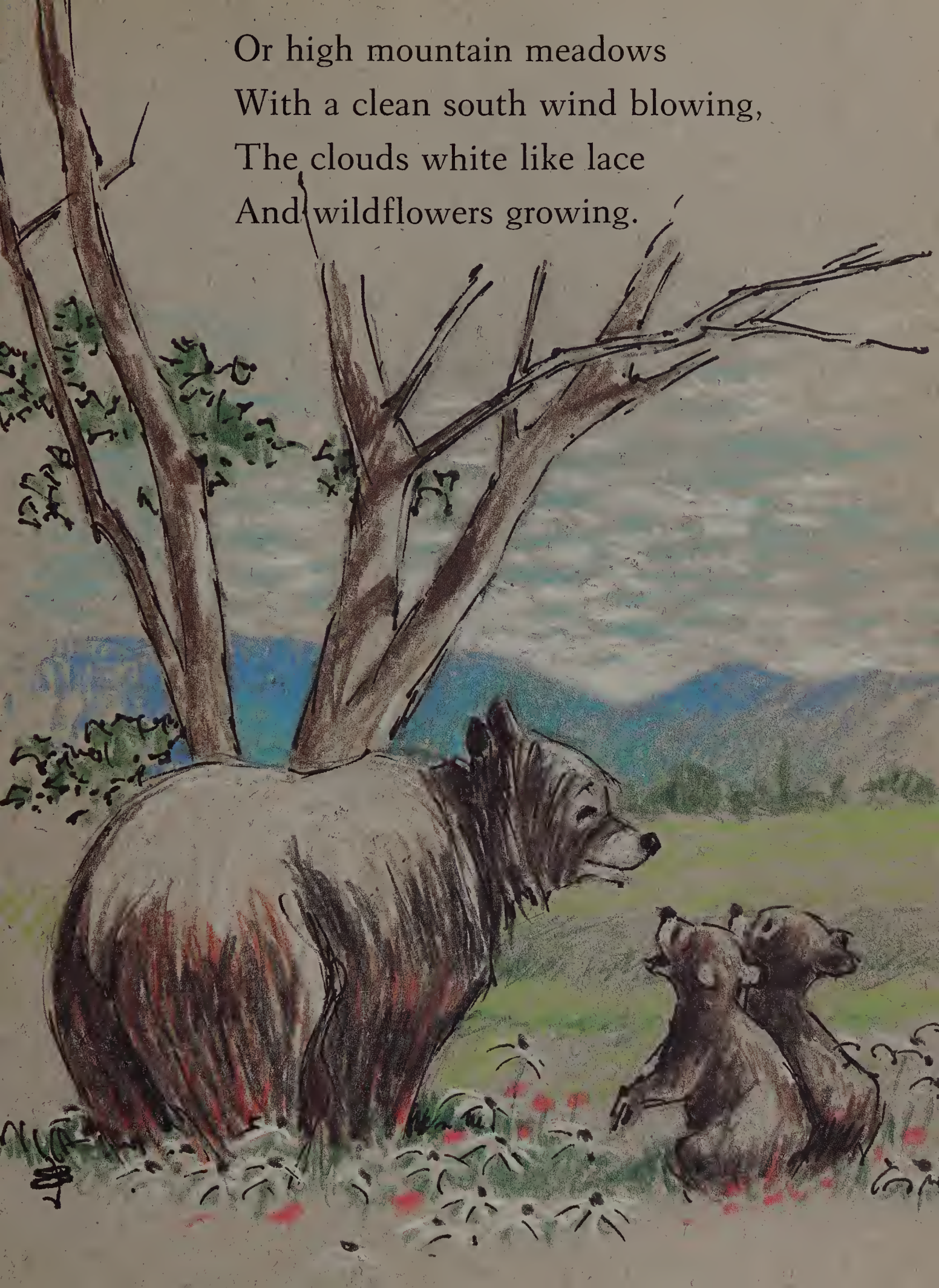




Maybe it's strawberries,  
All squashy and dripping,  
With juices so runny  
They're just made for sipping.



Or high mountain meadows  
With a clean south wind blowing,  
The clouds white like lace  
And wildflowers growing.







Or a soft summer night,  
Crickets sawing a tune,  
And a whisper of wind  
And a slice of a moon.





Does he dream of sweet cherries  
And old honey trees?  
Combs dripping with honey  
And no honeybees?

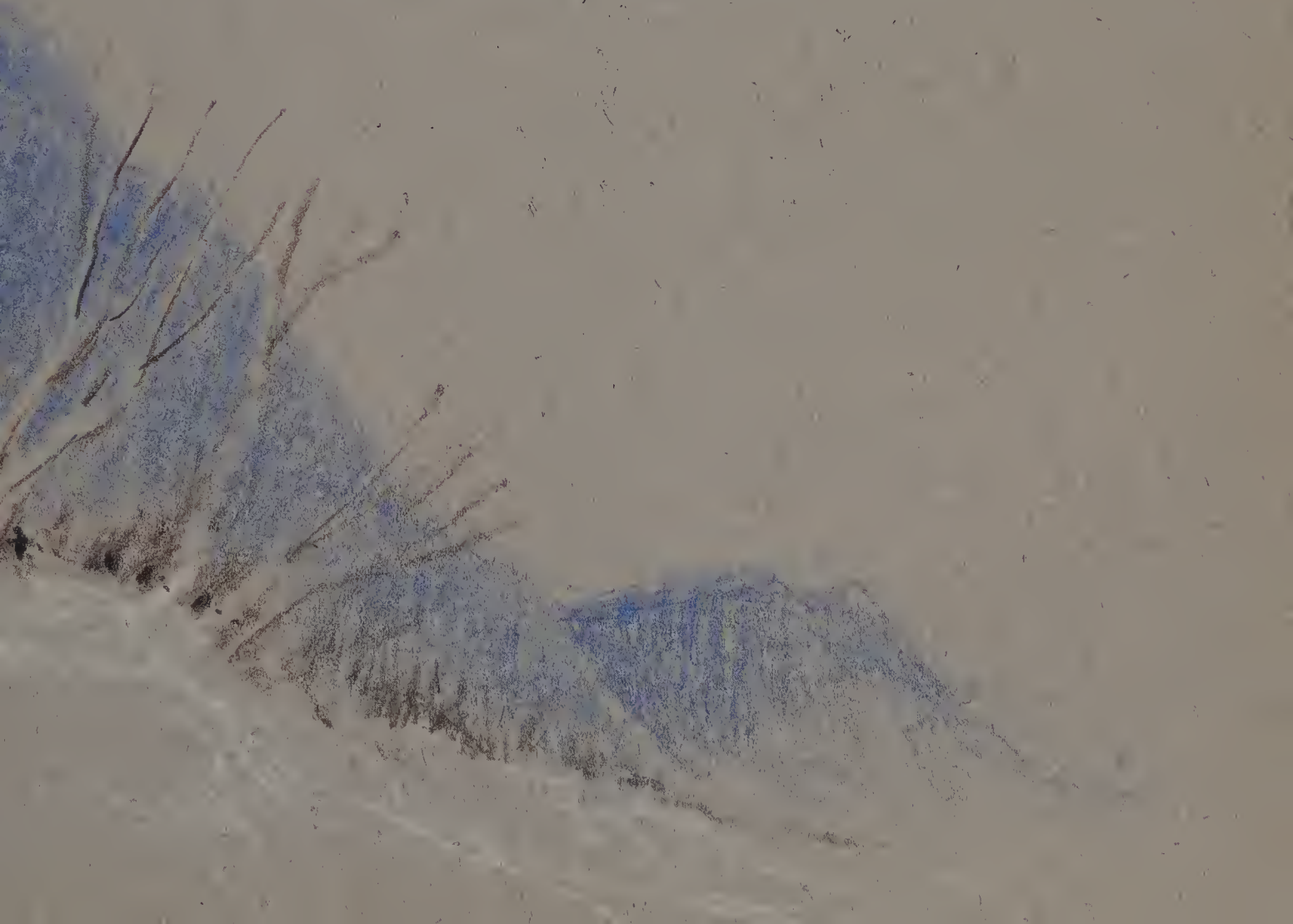






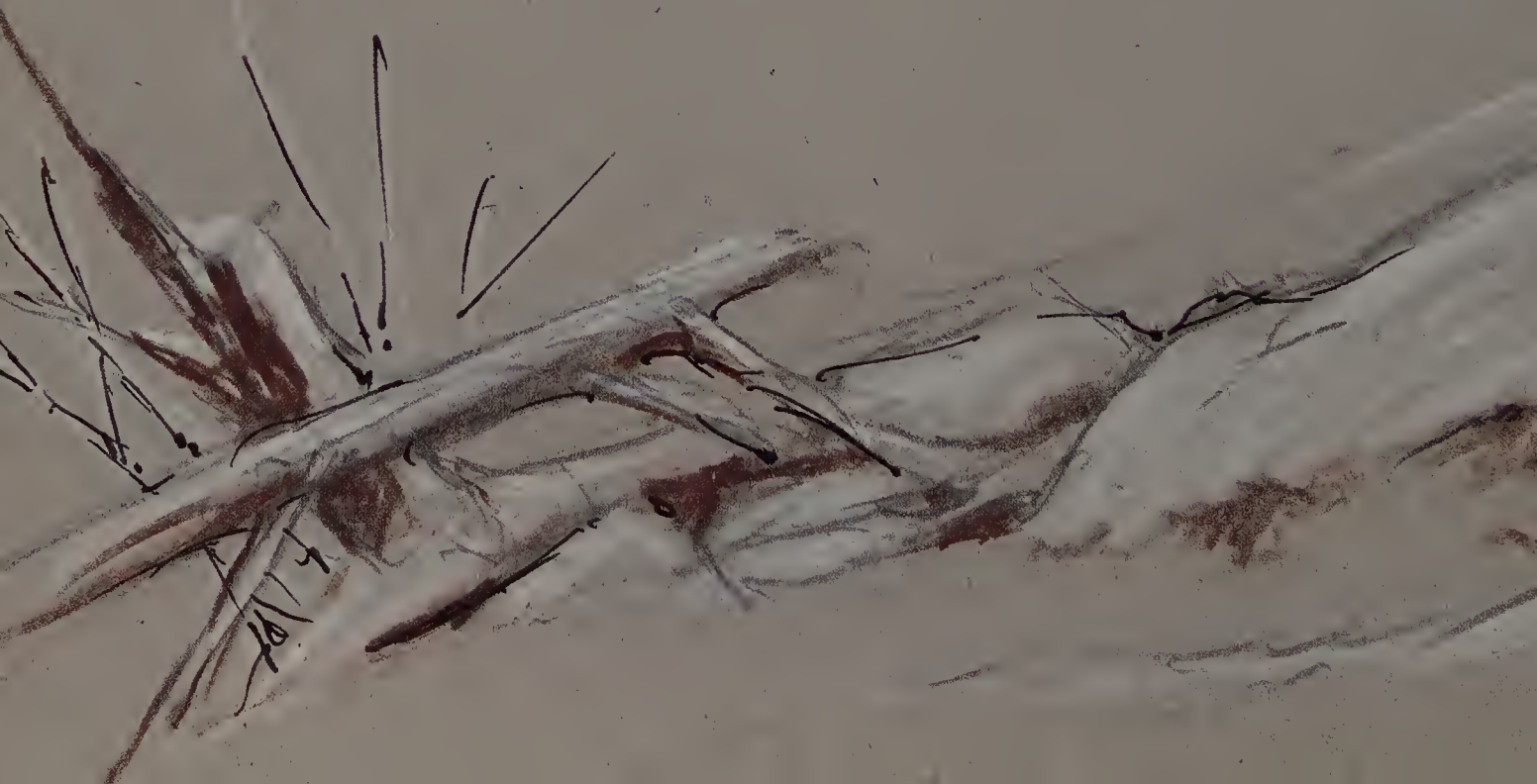
Now here are some problems—  
It doesn't seem right—  
How does he sleep  
When it's not even night?

How can he miss Christmas  
Or New Year's horns blaring?  
How can he lie there  
Without even caring?



How can he sleep  
Through a wild, howling blizzard  
Or a cold, driving wind  
That freezes his gizzard?

A bleary-eyed bear  
All droopy and dozy  
In his snow-drifted cave,  
Can his fur keep him cozy?









Try to imagine  
Or even to think—  
From November to April  
Without even a drink!

If I live to be ninety  
I'm sure I won't know  
How a bear sleeps  
Through the cold winter snow.











'Cause I'm sure it would be  
A horrendous mistake  
To go poking around  
And find him AWAKE!





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

E. J. Bird was born on a rocky one-man farm in the foothills of Utah. As a small boy, he always had plenty of animals to play with. He had pet colts, calves, dogs, and roosters. He once had a magpie that could talk and a black lamb that would pull him around in a little wooden cart. As he grew older, he began to draw the creatures around him, and he learned how to tell when they looked right or wrong on the canvas. Mr. Bird has worked as a ranch hand and as a professional artist, and he still loves to watch animals—especially bears. He is the author and illustrator of the Carolrhoda titles **TEN TALL TALES** and **CHUCK WAGON STEW**.

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—*Booklist*

To learn more about the winter habits of animals, read

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“Riha’s presentation . . . opens with a simple definition of hibernation. . . . In handsomely designed double-page spreads, the author highlights each creature’s activities year-round, with emphasis on autumnal food gathering and preparation of sleeping sites. . . . Full-color illustrations vividly [reflect] the animals’ activities and habitats.

—*Booklist*



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